

Christ before the century:

or,

New testimonies of the sciences in favor of Catholicism

by

Roselly de Lorgues

Chapter III.

Scientific Evidence for Christian Truth.

PENTATEUCH - CREATION - DELUGE

1st

At the risk of frightening certain sensibilities, let us speak according to our convictions; let's do it without disguise, without circumlocutions; let us put our finger on this hideous wound that philosophism, its bad faith, would like to hide in vain. His secret reasoning, we were going to say his poisoned dagger, striking straight to the heart of Christianity; let us summarize it in its substance, and present it frank and brief.

"Lying is only a vice when it does harm: it is a very great virtue when it does good. Let us therefore be more virtuous than ever. We must lie like the devil, not timidly, not for a time, but boldly and always... Great politicians must always deceive the public.¹ Through the traditions of the prophets, and before them of the patriarchs, our religion dates back to the birth of society. This antiJewishness is very imposing; it is absolutely necessary to discredit it, flout its cradle, shake its columns, the books of the Bible. Having made the serious patriarchs laughable, having convinced Moses of ignorance and cruelty, having reviled Genesis, it will be for entertainment to taunt the prophets, to affirm that their mission was "a profession; that one practiced it as if any other art; that a prophet, strictly speaking, was a visionary who assembled the people and told them his reveries; that it was the vilest species of men that there was among the Jews; that they resembled exactly like those charlatans who amuse the people in the squares of

¹ Voltaire. Complete works, Corresp. gen., letters of Oct. 21, 1736, and Feb. 4. 1762

big cities."² - "Arriving at this point, it will be easy for us to show that a skillful, enterprising man, having acquired in his travels notions of physics, juggling, even magnetism, chooses to exploit public credulity, a distant country, an ignorant population separated from Roman civilization by its language and its morals, infatuated with a superstitious expectation, that, applying certain passages of Jewish visionaries called prophets or seers, he succeeded in deceiving the crowd, in passing for the Messiah, which means an envoy, a man charged with a mission. (His was to rip off the onlookers, the number of whom was always great.) The laughing ones on our side, 'it will be a good game to scold the good apostles, the *twelve scoundrels*, especially the writers Mark, John, Luke, Matthew, to peel their gospel and give it *nazarers*. With all confidence, we can insinuate that Christian worship, like all others, is the more or less imperfect work of men passionate, liars, blind; that if it were from God, it would naturally elevate moral dignity above the superstitious fears of conscience; but in reality, instead of being made in his own likeness, gratifying him with the faults and vices with which he himself teems. --When we have repeated all these things, our time will have come. But as Christianity alone among all religions offers an imposing series of stories and facts, it is this continuous succession that must be broken; it is this venerable antiquity that it is important to demolish." - An ardent zeal welcomed this occult plan of philosophism; from then on its followers attacked above all the Old Testament.

Their most formidable objection to sacred cosmography concerns its author. They claim that Moses, a mythological being like Orpheus or Chiron, was never the legislator of the Hebrews; that the Pentateuch is the backdated work of Ezra; for, admitting the real existence of Moses, how could he have written the five books attributed to him? In the terrible desert, there was neither ink nor feathers, only sand. And besides, how would he have gone about it? writing was not invented! -- This sharp assertion was refuted already three thousand years ago, Joshua, who succeeded Moses in command, speaks of a city called *Cariath*

² Bibl. explanation, Spirit of Judaism, ch. 9.

Sepher, which means city of books.³ Berosus relates that Sisuthrus, before the flood, hid the letters and writings he possessed from Sisparis.⁴ In their support, we will recall that Mr. Champollion found in the museum of Egyptian antiquities in Turin, an act from the fifth year of the reign of Tuthmosis III, fifth king of the eighteenth dynasty. Now, Tuthmosis III governed Egypt around the time of Joseph, therefore more than two centuries before Moses wrote the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch is not the work of Moses, because the author would not have spoken of him in the third person. -- All right. But also recognize that Xenophon is not the author of the Anabasis, since he calls himself in the third person; that Josephus did not write the history of the Jewish war, since he mentions himself in the third person; that the Commentaries on the Gallic War are not by Caesar, since he is spoken of in the third person.

But, they add, how can we believe that Moses was so unmodest as to call himself a divine man? On the other hand there is also talk in Exodus of a half-shekel to be paid according to the measure of the temple. However, the Hebrews did not have a temple until several centuries after the death of Moses. It is also said in Deuteronomy: "These are the words that Moses spoke to the Israelites beyond the Jordan." Yet Moses never crossed the Jordan. -- Indeed, the pride of Moses must scandalize you, oh modest philosophers! but deign to learn Hebrew and reread the text: instead of divine man, you will find man of God, which means priest, sent, servant of God. Learn Hebrew, very learned philosophers, and instead of the word temple, you will read sanctuary, which will destroy the so-called anachronism. Believe us, learn Hebrew, inimitable philosophers; see Pagnin, Buxtorf, the new Hebrew roots, and EVERYONE will also know that the terrible adverb with which you overwhelm Moses did not mean beyond, but only near the Jordan.

³ Joshua, ch. 15, v. 15

⁴ Berosus, by Alex. Polyh. in Syncell, p30.

A final argument against the authenticity of the Pentateuch is in the account of the death of Moses which concludes this work. The dead are not in the habit of writing their history; obviously the last chapters of the last book of Moses could not have been his. The book of Joshua which, in the Bible, follows the Pentateuch, continues the story of Moses so immediately that it begins with the conjunction and. - The Talmud states that the last eight verses are from Joshua,⁵ and Volney himself admits this assertion as natural and reasonable.⁶

As for the apocryphal writing entitled Fourth Book of Ezra, which states, in the fourteenth chapter, that the Pentateuch was burned, that the Jews forgot it, and that Ezra, through infused knowledge of the lost book, dictated it to copyists; its falsity was publicly recognized. It is five to six hundred years later than the author whose name it bears. Moreover, the real Ezra denied his posthumous namesake by saying, in chapter VI, that the Hebrews who arrived before him in Jerusalem, lived there “according to the letter of the book of Moses”, and in chapter VII, that on leaving Babylon, he was “a skillful scribe of the law of Moses”. In the absence of these facts, the difference in style would prevent any misunderstanding. We still have one book by him left, let us read it and judge it. In Moses, the language is pure, noble, endearing; in Ezra, incorrect, hard, flat and dull. There the expressions breathe life and warmth; here, cold and death.⁷ The famous scholar Eichorn thinks that “there can be no doubt in history that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch”,⁸ the authority of Diodorus of Sicily⁹, of

⁵ From Voisin. *De lege div.*, p. 372

⁶ Volney. *Recherches nouvelles*, ch. VI

⁷ *Mélang, de relig.*, mai 1824

⁸ *Allgemeine einleitung in das Alte Testament.*

⁹ *S. Cyrill contra Julianum*, lib. I, p. 15

Eupolemus¹⁰, of Ptolemy Hephestion¹¹, of Philo, of Flavius Josephus¹², of Celsus¹³, also establishes it, and one of the authors of the great work of the Description of Egypt, Mr. du Bois-Aymé, remarked that, in good faith, "all critics are forced to recognize the Pentateuch as the oldest written tradition that has reached us¹⁴.

Having nothing against the authenticity of the Pentateuch, they claimed, in the name of science, to convince its author of ignorance and imposture.

1° They maintained that the space of six days could not have been sufficient for the creation of the world, since, in order for it to reach the solid state in which we see it, intervals of several thousand years had to flow between each new birth of nature. -- That light, existing only through the sun, could not have appeared earlier than its author; that it was putting the effect before the cause. -- That the earth could not have produced vegetation without the influence of the luminous star.

2° That the universal flood was a fabulous image. They proved its material impossibility by the spherical shape of the earth; its implausibility, by the own circumstances of his story. The ark, even according to the dimensions given by Moses, could not contain all the animals whose species exist today, the food necessary during their sequestration. The narrator paints the ark stopping on a mountain in Armenia shortly after the dove released by Noah brought an olive branch to its beak, and there are no olive trees in Armenia. -- If the ark contained all the men who were saved, where do the Mongolian and Ethiopian races come

¹⁰ Euseb. *Præparat. evangel.*, lib. IX, n 26.

¹¹ Photius. *Biblioth.*, n 190, p. 486. - Edit. 1653

¹² Phil. *De Vitâ Mosis.*- Jos. Contra apionem, lib. I et VIII

¹³ Orig. *Contrà Celsum*, lib. I et IV.

¹⁴ Notice sur le séjour des Hébreux en Égypte.

from, the American races whose traits so distinct, so indigenous, their isolation, and above all their existence so newly known, belie any supposed crossing with species originating from the Caucasian family? From Noah and his children could not come the Yolloff, the Mantchou, the Red Skin, the Barabras and their varieties. -- The current population figure attests to a broader and older source of reproduction than that which the Hebrew historian has pointed out to us.

3° The astronomical tables of the most ancient and civilized nations formally contradict the age that the Bible dares to give to our globe. The Chaldeans dated their first observations back to fourteen thousand years. The knowledge of the Sothic period which could only be acquired by following it a large number of times, and which covered a course of fourteen hundred and sixty years. The division of our zodiac established according to the planispheres of Esné and Denderah, approximately fifteen thousand years before our era, testify to an antiquity that the Egyptian dynasties and the lists of the Indian kings finally made incontestable.

S. II

To the accusations of a superficial attitude, this is what the positive science of the century in which we live responds.

“Observation shows that a long space of time elapsed 1° between the consolidation of the primitive layers of the globe and the appearance of life on its surface; 2° between the creation of the various races of animals; 3° between these and the creation of man. The proofs of these facts are irrefutable; since these layers are the product of a succession of slow effects, and the debris of plants and of animals that some of these layers contain, suppose a prodigious succession of distinct generations . . . But we have no way of assessing the

duration of the epochs in question.¹⁵

Who will say in how many hours the formation of the universe was accomplished? -- There are august secrets forever hidden in the darkness of the ages, and which human efforts cannot hide. Man has learned from his condition what he should know in the sphere of his destination and his existence. -- Sacred cosmography has revealed what it is up to our science to know, but nothing beyond. -- The word *yom* (day) does not mean the space between dawn and sunset; the Hebrew language often uses it for any specific time¹⁶. Moses could not call *jour* (day), in our usual sense of times when the luminous stars were not yet. The sun only exists on the calendar of the *days* mentioned. Moreover, Genesis also uses the same word *jour* (day) for all the time when the Lord God made heaven and earth. (Ch.2, v. 4.) It follows from this that in the history of creation the word *jour* (day) expresses periods without determinate length. "To determine the true meaning of the word *day* in Genesis," says a member of the faculty of physical sciences in Paris, "it is enough to consider that this book is written in poetic language, and that the words that have been translated by *soir* (evening), *matin* (morning), have a completely different meaning. The expression *hereb*, which was rendered evening, means mixture, confusion, disorder, and is frequently used in this sense in Scripture. (Exodus, c.8, v. 24 : and c. 12, v. 38) And the word *boquer*, which has been translated literally as morning, *diluculum*, time when objects begin to be illuminated, to no longer be confused, means poetically, and by antithesis with the previous expression, *order, regular arrangement of objects*. Finally the word *yom*, to which we have given the meaning of day, also means a certain interval of time, an era. (Genesis, c. 25, v. 33: et *liber Isaiah*, c. 2, v. 17 and 20.) Thus in Genesis, the evening expresses only the disorder existing before a creation; the morning, only the order which

¹⁵ De Férussac. *Bull. univ. des sciences*, sect. *Sciences nat.* , t. X, n° 137.

¹⁶ Salvador, *Hist. des Inst. of Moses*, part. II, sect. 2, ch. I

succeeds it, and the day is the completed creation , or the time when it took place¹⁷

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¹⁷ M. Blaud. Arch. univers. de la relig., aut 1832.

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CHAPTER IV

ASTRONOMY - CHRONOLOGY

S1

Despairing of finding an accomplice on earth, philosophism tried to make the heavens lie; he wanted to suborn the planispheres and the astronomical signs of the people. To contrast the chronology of Moses with the chronology of nations, he deployed a luxury of planetary, zodiacal, telescopic erudition, which dazzled the numerous breed of half-savants. He announced monuments which, with certainty, postponed the study of the stars for FIFTEEN THOUSAND YEARS.

-Let's see how much the positive sciences have lowered these gigantic pretensions.

The Moniteur of February 14, 1802, in a long article on the zodiacs of Upper Egypt, dared to say: "It will remain constant that the current division of the zodiac, as we know it, was established among the Egyptians approximately FIFTEEN THOUSAND years before the Christian era; that it has been preserved without alteration and has been transmitted to all

other peoples." -- Open yours, the mature contradicts this fabulous antique. Read his testimony. "The Arabian coast on the Red Sea is cluttered with banks or coral reefs, which make the approach difficult and dangerous. These reefs are the work and habitation of polyps, which as they work , abandoning their first dwellings on which they continue to build. In hot climates, the polyps are still active; they do not stop multiplying and building; from which it results that in a short time they increase by one sensibly the mass of their dwellings, which do not deteriorate as they age, being of the same nature as the test of the shells." 1

Ghalefka, a once famous town, is now a poor village whose few inhabitants live from their date palms and their fishing; the coast there is now so full of coral banks that the port is impassable even for small boats. (We observe the very rapid growth of these coral banks, a few leagues north of Motka.) If it therefore only took a few centuries to make a port and the surrounding coasts impassable, this results in this rigorous consequence, that all these places would have been inaccessible to ships for many centuries, if the Red Sea and its coasts had existed for FIFTEEN THOUSAND years before the Christian era, which would still suppose many thousands of previous years. The Red Sea, being narrow and shallow, would be completely jammed. 1 Coral reefs exist around a

large number of islands located between the tropics. They extend around New Caledonia. "These polypiers, whose continual growth increasingly obstructs the sea basin, are capable of frightening navigators. Many of the shallows, which still offer a passage today, will not take long to form extremely dangerous reefs. dangerous." 2 By what hypotheses can such facts be destroyed? . . . Poor philosophy!

In 1821, in a session of the Academy of Sciences, M. de Paravey overturned the theory of Dupuis, Volney and Fourier. This last present was so motivated by the motives of M. de Paravey, that he authorized him to publish that, in his letter to Berthollet, cited by the famous Lalande, he had been made to speak of an antiquity to which he did not never believed. The conclusions of M. de Paravey were admitted in the name of the Academy of Sciences, by MM. Delambre, Ampere and Guvier. -- These positive and mathematical results obtained by Mr. Paravey, a few years later Mr. Champollion confirmed them, by means of hieroglyphs. 1

In addition to the zodiac of Denderah, there was the zodiac of Esné (the ancient Latopolis). The latter was even said to be older. -- Mr. Champollion read the date of the zodiac of Denderah. It was made after Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, Domitian. -- Mr. Champollion read the date of the zodiac of

Esné. The name of Antoninus-the-Pious is written there. So, they both postdate the establishment of our religion.

While Mr. Champollion discovered their real date by the phonetic alphabet, on another side, proceeding by the science of Greek antiquities, Mr. Letronne had arrived at the same result, and had found, in the inscriptions of the temples of Esné and Denderah, the names that we had just read in the hieroglyphic legends. "The Egyptian zodiacs," says this learned archaeologist, "thus deprived of the great antiquity that had been so generously given to them, and of the purely astronomical character that had been supposed to them, lose almost all their importance." 2 -- Among the Egyptians, the oldest astronomical monuments mentioned by Ripparchus and Ptolemy are several lunar eclipses, the earliest of which was observed in Babylon, 721 years before J.G.

These two authors, the two first astronomers in the world, did not deign to speak of the 373 solar eclipses, and the 832 lunar eclipses, of which, according to Diegène Laërve, Egyptian traditions preserved the memory.

As for the great year or Sothic period, which was made to sound so high, because its course being 1,460 years, it was said that it had reappeared many times, having been studied; oe which supposed the deepest antiquity; he just had to observe a single part of it with some attention, to know it in its

entirety with the little precision it had among the Egyptians. -- The great revolution of the zodiac around the poles of the ecliptic was not known on the banks of the Nile until the time of Hipparchus, around two hundred and fifty years before J.G. It does not matter, it was subsequently included in the ancient discoveries of Egypt, and she surveyed there the period of thirty-six thousand years. This revolution is what is called today, in astronomy, the precession of the equinoxes. -- Let us make it clear by an example.

Consider a straight line led from the center of the earth to the western intersection of the ecliptic and the equator and extended indefinitely in the region of the stars. The star which is at the end of this line this year, at the time of the spring equinox, will be more easterly by 50 seconds and three degrees, at the time of the next spring equinox; 100 seconds and 40 tiers at the time of the equinox of the following spring, and so on; so that it will take this star 5,740 years to return to the same intersection of the ecliptic and the equator, at the spring equinox. -- This revolution, unknown to the ancient Egyptians, disappointed by Hipparchus, was still exactly known in the time of Ptolemy, was estimated by the latter astronomer at approximately 36,000 years, although it was only 5,740 years. -- In support of this chimerical antiquity, came the famous golden circle of 365 cubits in circumference, which decorated the tomb of Osymandias, and which served

to divide the year into 365 days and to direct astronomical observations.

Among the Shahleans, where astrologers boasted of having 47 thousand years of observations, nothing was found that justified these claims. After the conquest of Babylon, Callisthemus, at the request of Aristotle and by the order of Alexander, carried out the greatest research in this city. The astronomical monuments he found there only date back 700 years, following Epigenes and Pliny. 1

The historian of astronomy, M. Delambre, assures us "that the Chaldeans, the Chinese and the Indians are foreign to mathematical astronomy. . . . We do not possess any slightly ancient monument of their knowledge; all is well known for the Chinese and the Indians have quite modern works; and as for the Chaldeans and the Egyptians, we cite in their favor only a few vague and insignificant testimonies from writers who are not considered very competent in these matters. . . . There is no way to have a precise idea of the science of the ancients (in astronomy). If this science existed, the proofs of it are lost.:

2 The scholar Klaproth said, note these words: "The astronomical tables of the Hindus, to which we had attributed a prodigious antiquity, were built in the seventh century of the vulgar era, and were subsequently postponed, by calculations, to an earlier era." 3 -- Let us conclude: new proofs would be superfluous; let us conclude, however

recalling the opinion of a man whose name alone is a decisive authority, Cuvier!

"All the efforts of spirit and science (that impiety formerly made to find in the zodiac of Denderah a date prior to the flood) have become superfluous, since, ending where naturally we would have started if prevention did not had not blinded the first observers, we took the trouble to copy and restore the Greek inscriptions engraved on these monuments, and especially since Mr. Champollion succeeded in deciphering those expressed in hieroglyphics. It is now certain, and the Greek inscriptions agree, to prove it, with the hieroglyphic inscriptions, it is certain, we say, that the (Egyptian) temples in which zodiacs were sculpted were built under the domination of the Romans. . . . Thus it is have vanished forever the conclusions that we wanted to draw from a few poorly explained monuments, against the novelty of continents and nations." 1 Let us add, and consequently against the truth of the Pentateuch.

The help he had expected from the planispheres, philosophism also hoped for chronology, to show that men, thrown naked on earth, had successively invented speech, writing, mathematics, the arts, in a Word the societ, and thus justify the fifteen thousand years of Egyptian studies, the

forty-seven thousand years of Chaldean work in astronomy, and the thousands of siecles, of which he spoke with certainty. This venerable antiquity made the tradition of Moïse's tradition, well, barely giving barely four thousand years before Jesus Christ to our terrocked planet. In order to better discredit it, we tried to put it in the grip with itself, by opposing the Vulgate translation, the version of the Septuagint: which even embarrassed little-educated (not educated Christians. It was assured that, by its adoption of the vulgate, the Church had; And the Impete had to support him a direct interest, as well as it will be easy to see it.

The vulgate and the version of the Septuagint are in conformity in dogma, in morality, in historical facts; But differ in the part of chronological times. -The author of the Vulgate Edition, Saint Jérôme, saw that all the Hebrew manuscripts of the ancient-testament that he could obtain, had the same chronology; But that this chronology differs mainly in the Pentateuch, that of the Septuagint: this is what determinated him to restore the chronology of the Hebrew text in the translation he gave.

To explain this difference, the scholars can peak that, in the ancient manuscripts of the Pentateuch, it was, by the fault of the copyists, a displacement or a transposition due or the figure which expressed a century in the age of certain patriarchs; And that the Septuagints only re-established in his

place, this signal or transposed sign, everywhere where they deemed, either according to tradition, or according to some more correct and authentic manuscript, that this change was necessary. A few savans still peak that it was formerly the use, among the Hebrews, to hear, in the calculation, the digital sign, which expressed the first century, and that the seventies judged at

Saint Irénée, Saint Clément of Alexandria and Saint Théodore regard as true and holy the version of the Septuagint; Saint Hilaire declares that, in the places where translations vary, we must refer to the seventies. 1 This is what Saint Jérôme, in his preface to the vulgate, himself recognizes: "Post Septuaginta Nihil in Sacris Litteris Potest Immutari Vel Perverti, Quin Eorum Translatione Omnis Fraus and Dolus Patefaciat."

After the Septuagint, nothing in the sacred letters can be changed or perverted, without their translation revealing all fraud and deceit

